

character. He was no aristocrat, but a humble and peaceable servant of the Church, who yet had the rare sense to know fchat she was open to criticism. He never would take the lead in the persecution of heresy. Similarly in politics, if Courtenay wanted any steps taken against the Duke of Lancaster, he had to force the hand of his kindly and lethargic chief. Another leader of the Bishops in their opposition to the existing ministry was Brunton of Rochester, a man who differed as much from Sudbury as from Courtenay. A fire of moral indignation burnt in his heart, which blazed out in his sermons when he attacked the social abuses of his age with an impetuosity and courage worthy of Hugh Latiuier. Even when these abuses took a political form, he spared not his voice for fear of any man, and his pulpit eloquence was now directed against the adherents of John of Gaunt. * 'Our modern rulers,' he cried, 'those overthrowers of truth and justice, wishing to raise their lords to the altars¹ as they know how, have proclaimed the coward a hero, the weak man strong, the fool a wise man, the adulterer and pursuer of luxury a man chaste and holy. And in order to turn all interests to their advantage, they encourage their King in notorious crimes, whilst, so as to be seen by all coining to Court, they set up the idol of worldly fear in order to prevent anyone, of whatsoever rank or condition he may be, from daring to stand up against, or castigate, the evil doers.*^a Some of the lesser Bishops, however, were not so violently hostile to the Duke. Ralph Erghum of Salisbury served him in the administration of his Duchy of Lancaster and adhered to his party in the State; several others afterwards fell under suspicion of lending him temporary support, where the interests of the Church were not directly threatened.

The Abbots who were summoned to Parliament took no more part in politics than the isolated institutions over which they presided took in the life of the country in general.

On April 29, the Chancellor Knyvet addressed both Houses assembled in the Painted Chamber, and asked fo* a

¹ Via. ' to be worshipped.¹

* O. JO. B. f. 70.